THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (c) As per the provisional merchandise trade data provided by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistice (DGCI&S), exports of gems and Jewellery and readymade gaapents rose by 22.43 percent and 7.85 percent in dollar terms, respectively, during (April-January), 2002-03, the latest period for which the data is available.

(d) Export promotion being a constant endeavour, a medium Term Export Strategy which is co-terminus with the 10th plan period (2002-07) was announced in January, 2002 with the objective of enhancing India's exports. In line with this strategy, a number of programmes/schemes have been launched which include schemes like Assistance to State for Developing Export Infrastructure (ASIDE), establishing Agri Export Zones, Market Access Initiative, strenghening "Focus LAC" programme, introducing "Focus Africa" programme, etc. In the Exim Policy 2003-04, besides, the focus on Service exports, policies have been devised to strengthen Special Economic Zones (SEZs), 100% Export Oriented Units (EOU's) etc. A new programme called "Focus CIS" has been introduced. Thus measures are being taken from time to time increase India's exports.

Legislation for SEZs

3877. DR.T.SUBBARAMIREDDY:
DR. M. N. DAS :
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRIMATIN.P.DURGA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether as part of its strategy to accelerate export growth, Government have decided to bring in a legislation to remove roadblock in Special Economic Zones;

(b) if so, whether any draft legislation in this regard has been prepared;

(c) whether all the concerned have been consulted before introducing this legislation; and

(d) if so, by when the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A draft Bill on Special Economic Zones has been formulated and circulatd to concerned departments for their comments.

New transit agreement between India,

Iran and Afghanistan

3878. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether India, Iran and Afghanistan had met in Tehran to finalise a new transit agreement between the three countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present trade route between these three countries; and;

(d) the project that would be executed by India to help trade and transit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) India, Iran and Afghanistan held a trilateral meeting on 4 and 5 January 2003 at Tehran to discuss the development of transit and transport between the three countries, elimination of barriers and constraints, and providing safe, smooth, rapid and low-cost transportation. At the end of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Development and Construction of Transit and Transport Infrastructures in Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Delaram route was signed between the three countries aimed at improving access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

(c) At present the trade between the three countries is conducted through commercially available channels and routes including through Bandarabbas and Chabahar ports in Iran.

(d) As part of the development of Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Delaram route jointly with Iran and Afghanistan, India would be undertaking the construction of Zaranj-Delaram road segment in Afghanistan.